

Tips for Social Emotional Skills

Suggested Ages 3 - 5



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a Brain Building Moment™!

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Vroom Tip Collection

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Little Shopper

When buying groceries, hunt with your child for the things on your list. Ask them to find the item you're both looking for. Maybe they can take it off of the shelf or put it in the cart. They could have their own bag or help you pay the cashier.

Tip # 282

Brainy Background

Working together to complete a task gives your child an important lesson in teamwork. It's an essential part of understanding others, while also strengthening the bond you have. When you give your child doable responsibilities, they feel confident and will be more likely to take on challenges.

Suggested Age 2.5—5 years

Faces and Feelings

Next time you and your child are stuck waiting, point out a face in a magazine, ad, or picture and have them copy it. Ask them what they think the person is feeling. Discuss with them when both of you might have felt this way too.

Tip # 219

Brainy Background

When you talk about your own and others' feelings you're helping your child learn to take a new point of view, which is helpful in getting along with others.

Suggested Age 4—5 years

Practice Makes Perfect

Do you and your child have a daily challenge, like getting ready for school? Have them practice that challenge during play-time. You can say: "Let's pretend we're getting ready to go to school. What should we do first?" Talk about the steps if they need help remembering. "We eat our breakfast, pack our lunch, brush our teeth, and then get on the bus."

Tip # 937

Brainy Background

When children have the chance to practice something, they begin to feel a sense of control in challenging situations. They're practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they break the task down into steps and apply what they already know to solve it.

Suggested Age 2—4 years

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Over, Under, Through

Invite your child to explore different ways to move over, under, and through. Outside, they can jump over a rock, walk under a tree, and run through the grass. Inside, they can go over a pillow, crawl under a table, and skip through a doorway. How many ways can they go over, under, and through?

Tip # 982

Brainy Background

Your child is learning how to focus and use self-control by playing games where they listen and follow directions, instead of doing what they might want to do—an important skill in learning. They're also learning to think flexibly as they come up with ideas for new ways to move.

Suggested Age 2.5—4 years

Weather Feelings

Encourage your child to think about their feelings and describe them using the weather. Do they feel sunny, cloudy, or rainy? Ask them to explain why. Share how you're feeling with them. Talk together about what to do if one of you is not feeling "sunny."

Tip # 142

Brainy Background

When your child connects their feelings with images, they're using symbols to describe thoughts and feelings—an important literacy skill. This conversation also helps them understand you can both have different feelings, which is important in understanding how others think or feel.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

Helping Hands

When you're running errands, look for neighborhood helpers. Ask, "Who helps us?" Do you see a store clerk, a police officer, firefighter, or delivery person? Talk back and forth about how each person helps your family. Talk about how you and your child help each other too.

Tip # 635

Brainy Background

In talking back and forth about helpers, you give your child a chance to practice holding information in their mind, seeing how it connects to their experience.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

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Shoe Store

Help your child set up a pretend shoe store at home by collecting pairs of shoes. They can pretend to buy shoes and try on different pairs while you pretend to be the salesperson. Talk about the size and color of the shoes. Then it's your turn to buy and their turn to sell.

Tip # 994

Brainy Background

Pretending is one of the most important ways for your child to learn how the world works as well as to practice skills like paying attention to details. When you talk back and forth about what you're doing, they're also learning new words for color, shape, and size.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

Acting Out

Every child sometimes does something they should NOT do. Use this time to talk to them about WHY they should not have done it. Then ask them to draw a picture of what happened on a piece of paper. On the other side of the paper, have them draw what they could have done in a better way. Ask them why this new idea would be a better choice.

Tip # 60

Brainy Background

Using this strategy changes your approach from dealing with misbehavior to growing and learning. Coming up with new solutions helps your child learn ways to avoid going on autopilot. Instead they can think of better ways to deal with problems.

Suggested Age 4—5 years

Pick Me Up

Make picking up toys a game with your child. Who can pick up the toys first or the fastest? Change the rules as you go along. Who can find something red or blue?

Tip # 403

Brainy Background

Pickup time turns a cleanup time into brain building time. Your child is learning the skill of paying attention, of following directions, and of thinking flexibly as you change the rules. They're also learning to become responsible for taking care of their toys.

Suggested Age 3—5 years

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Stress Busters

During a calm moment, invite your child to think of ideas to help when they feel stressed. They can try using words to explain feelings, hitting something that can't be hurt, or counting numbers. See what works and brainstorm new ideas.

Tip # 174

Brainy Background

Asking your child to think of ideas to help manage stress helps in several ways. They can learn to manage their feelings and behavior. You're also helping them learn to take on challenges.

Suggested Age 2.5—5 years

Loving Name Calling

Make up categories of silly and loving names you can call each other. They can be all vegetables or animals or any other category—like types of pies! You can say, "You're my pumpkin pie." Have them think of a silly name for you in the same category, "You're my sweet potato pie."

Tip # 172

Brainy Background

Loving Name Calling is not only a wonderful way to express affection for each other, it also helps your child draw on memories of past experiences and connect them to new experiences, to understand categories of things, and to expand their vocabulary.

Suggested Age 2.5—5 years

Face Off

Make a face that expresses a feeling. Ask your child to make a face that shows the opposite feeling. If you make a happy face, they should make a sad face. Chat about when they remember people making these faces. Take a selfie or draw a picture together with your goofiest faces to stretch the moment!

Tip # 11

Brainy Background

Mirroring the emotions of others helps your child learn empathy. It can also help them express their own feelings. These are essential skills that we use every day as adults!

Suggested Age 4—5 years

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